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## Bakens verzetten in het voortgezet onderwijs, 1863-1920

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## Summary

### **Setting out new courses for secondary education, 1863-1920 Gymnasium, HBS and MMS in the educational system, curricula and history as a school subject**

This thesis focuses on the history of four different types of Dutch secondary school: the gymnasium (with classical languages), the HBS-5 (secondary modern school with a five-year course), the HBS-3 (secondary modern school with a three-year course) and the MMS (secondary school for girls). The main focus is on the educational ideals of these schools. The research question is: what can be said to be the identity of each of these different types of public secondary school -the gymnasium, the HBS-5, the HBS-3 and the MMS- in the period between about 1863 and 1920, on the basis of their curricula and the underlying educational ideals? The thesis examines educational ideals at three levels: the educational system, the curriculum and the school subject. At each level views about education and educational practice are described.

#### *The educational system*

Views about the educational system are studied on the basis of political discussions and statements made by teachers and principals. The political discussions are studied on the basis of printed state documents, the statements of teachers are studied on the basis of teachers' journals.

The study takes the Law of Secondary Education of 1863 as a starting point. The Minister of Home Affairs, J.R. Thorbecke, was responsible for this law. The hierarchical structure of society was the organizing principle of the law and the educational system mirrored this social order. The HBS-5 and HBS-3 were meant for boys of the commercial and industrial classes. By teaching mathematics, science and modern languages, the HBS aimed to raise the educational standard of Dutch society. The educational ideal of these schools was to pass on useful general knowledge. The gymnasium on the other hand was meant for the elite and aimed at erudition. Classical languages were at the heart of the curriculum. According to Thorbecke, the ideal of erudition was sharply opposed to the ideal of useful, general knowledge.

Because of this distinction, Thorbecke placed the HBS-3 and the HBS-5 in a different segment of the educational system than the gymnasium. The HBS-3 and HBS-5 were labeled as secondary education and were therefore regulated by the 1863 Law of Secondary Education; the gymnasium

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on the other hand was considered to be linked to the university and according to Thorbecke was therefore to be regulated by the Law of Higher Education. The gymnasium even had the monopoly on preparation for university.

Thorbecke paid little attention to girls' schools. The MMS was also categorized as secondary education, but the 1863 law only mentioned this school briefly. Seven years after the Law of Secondary Education was passed, a school inspector, D.J. Steyn Parvé, drew up a document describing the content and educational goals of the MMS. He emphasized the need for a broad education for girls, but also clung to the idea that girls had a fixed future role within the family: the role of wife and mother. The educational ideal he formulated can be characterized as the 'ideal of the educated mother'.

Previous studies of HBS and gymnasium have usually taken Thorbecke's views of HBS and gymnasium for granted, assuming that there was a gap between these two schools and making no distinction between the HBS-3 and the HBS-5. This thesis points out that the educational ideals formulated by Thorbecke changed during the period 1863-1920. Contrary to Thorbecke's intentions, a substantial number of HBS-5 pupils did go on to university - after special approval of the minister or after passing an entrance exam. From that time on, the HBS-5 entered into a competition with the gymnasium. Until 1917, the HBS was not formally recognized as a school for pre-university education, but from 1876 onwards the State did take several steps that led towards this new role. The educational ideal of the HBS-5 gradually changed from the ideal of useful general education to the ideal of pre-university education. As the HBS-5 moved closer to the gymnasium, it moved further away from the HBS-3. The educational ideal of the gymnasium also changed. Because of the 'demands of the present' politicians argued that the gymnasium and its educational goals should move closer to the HBS-5. From 1876 onwards it was clear that not erudition, but subject-oriented pre-university education was the educational ideal of the gymnasium. In political and professional discussions about the educational system, the MMS was hardly mentioned.

### *Curricula*

The teachers' journals examined in order to find teachers' views on the educational system, also yielded information about views on and develop-

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ments in the curricula. The curricula are also studied on the basis of Royal Decrees and the syllabuses of individual schools.

The results at the curriculum level match the results at the level of the educational system. The shift in the educational ideal of the gymnasium, from erudition to pre-university education, is reflected in the curriculum in two ways: firstly, the university's preliminary course was transferred to the gymnasium, and secondly, the highest classes of the gymnasium were split up into a science track and a humanities track. These measures were taken to get the gymnasium into line with the 'demands of the present'. At the end of the period this trend resulted in the diminution of classical languages, in favour of science and modern languages. The educational ideal of the gymnasium had come close to that of the HBS-5. The shift in the educational ideal of HBS-5, from useful general knowledge to pre-university education, was reflected by the attainment of a uniform curriculum and in the decline of practical subjects such as commercial science, drawing and writing. There were even several pleas for teaching Latin at the HBS-5.

The shift of the HBS-5 away from the HBS-3 was also reflected in the curriculum. In 1916 the curriculum of the HBS-3 differed on crucial points from the curriculum prescribed by the government for the first three years of HBS-5. This indicates that the two schools had different functions. From the discussions, the impression emerges that the HBS-3 remained closer to Thorbecke's ideal of passing on useful general knowledge than the HBS-5. Teachers complained that the HBS-5 did not pay enough attention to useful general knowledge. These complaints were never heard about the HBS-3. However, teachers seem to have preferred the ideal of a broad education to the ideal imparting useful general knowledge. They wanted to transform the HBS-3 into a comprehensive school.

Previous studies of the MMS have given different pictures of this type of school, varying from a stable identity to a changing identity and from a type of school with a unique educational ideal to a school with an identity resembling that of the gymnasium. This thesis describes a development in the educational ideal of this school type and claims that the MMS tried to identify itself with either the HBS-5 or the gymnasium. The educational ideal proclaimed by Steyn Parvé was the ideal of 'the educated mother'. The curriculum contained subjects aimed at general education, but also subjects related to the girls' future role as mothers, such as rules of hygiene. Around 1900 the

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MMS identified itself with HBS-5. It was clear that girls were no longer satisfied with an education which was of little value in society. They aspired to economic independence. The focus of the MMS gradually moved from the home to work opportunities outside the home. Next to departments that held on to the ideal of the educated mother, schools opened departments whose ideals resembled those of the HBS-5 and which aimed to produce educated women. After the turn of the century MMS teachers emphasized that girls had their own specific nature and that this should have consequences for their education. The educational ideal behind this view can be characterized as the ideal of feminine education. The gymnasium was seen as a suitable role model for this ideal.

### *A school subject: history*

History education is studied on the basis of teachers' journals, Royal Degrees, syllabuses of individual schools and history books. At the level of the school subject, the traditional view of the classical gymnasium and the modern HBS-5 and the differences between the two is borne out, but the similarities can also be seen. Gymnasias gave ancient history an important position in history education and used specialized books for this subject, but the study showed that there was also a considerable amount of attention for modern history, political history and politics. The HBS-5 emphasized economic history, and the books used at HBSs had a typically impersonal and terse style. However, HBSs also paid considerable attention to ancient history.

History education at the HBS-3 was in line with the ideal of a broad education, according to which both knowledge of modern society and knowledge of ancient society were important. It aimed at developing cognitive skills as well as building character. At the end of the period studied, history education at the HBS paid a great deal of attention to both modern history and ancient history. Moreover, many of the history books used by these schools were also used at the MMS. Finally, the broad character of history education at the HBS-3 was reflected in the uniformity and stability of history education in these schools. Despite the lack of a uniform curriculum during most of the time, these schools apparently had the same interpretation of the aims of history education. The study of history education confirms the findings as to the relationship between HBS-3 and HBS-5. At the end of the period studied, HBS-3 and HBS-5 had few books in common. The style of

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books used at HBS-3 and HBS-5 also differed considerably. Books used at HBS-3 were more often narrative in nature or were significantly easier than those used at HBS-5.

In contrast to the stable and uniform character of history education at HBS-3, history education at individual MMS schools varied widely. This can be interpreted as a consequence of the fact that this type of school attempted to identify itself with the HBS or the gymnasium while at the same time trying to establish an identity of its own. The identification of the MMS with schools that were originally meant for boys is also reflected in the textbooks used. Several MMSs used a history book that was intended to prepare pupils for the Royal Military Academy. After the turn of the century the MMS took the gymnasium as a point of reference. At that time MMSs used specialized books for ancient history and in fact they used many of the same books as the gymnasia. Simultaneously however, MMS-s tried to build an identity of their own. This effort was reflected in special attention given to civilization and in the textbooks used. These books were narrative in style, containing anecdotes and biographies. One of the books even contained pictures, which was unusual for that time.

### *Conclusion*

In the period 1863-1920, the gymnasium, the HBS-5, the HBS-3 and the MMS were setting out new courses. They took each other as points of reference. The boundaries of the strictly separated educational ideals laid out by Thorbecke gradually faded. The educational ideal of erudition -the ideal of the gymnasium-, and the ideal of useful general knowledge -the ideal of the HBS-5-, both shifted in the direction of the goal of pre-university schooling. The gap between the two schools closed. In order to provide an adequate pre-university education, the gymnasium offered a well balanced curriculum including classical languages. This curriculum paid attention both to the pupils' cognitive development and to their acquisition of civilization. The HBS-5 on the other hand seems to have emphasized cognitive development. The MMS identified itself with both these schools. The educational ideal of the educated mother first developed in the direction of the HBS-5, which resulted in the ideal of the educated woman and then in the direction of the gymnasium, which led to the ideal of feminine education. As regards the HBS-3, it has become clear that this school deserves a position of its own in

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the study of the history of education. This school seems to have ended up in an isolated position. Its educational ideal was ambiguous. There is evidence that it maintained the ideal of imparting useful general knowledge, but on the other hand teachers were clearly held sympathetic to the ideal of a broad education.

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